
If you believe you are eligible to vote and encounter difficulty registering, please contact the South Carolina State Election Commission:

State Election Commission
P.O. Box 5987
Columbia, SC 29250-5987
(803) 734-9060 (voice)
(803) 734-4381 (fax)

If the South Carolina State Election Commission is unable to help you, or to report a problem, contact:

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Voting Section, Rm. 7254 - NWB
Washington, D.C. 20530
(202) 307-2767 (voice)
(800) 253-3931 (toll-free)
(202) 307-3961 (fax)
www.usdoj.gov/crt

This pamphlet is provided for informational purposes only, as an aid to further inquiry. The laws in many states are revised frequently, and may have changed since this pamphlet was issued. It is your responsibility to determine whether you are lawfully eligible to vote, and criminal penalties can result from voting when ineligible or making false statements on a registration form.

Issued December, 2000

U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division



Restoring Your Right to Vote



SOUTH CAROLINA

The right to vote is an important civil right in a democracy as well as a civic responsibility, and yet many persons who have been convicted of a crime do not know whether they are eligible to vote. For both federal and state elections, the right to vote is controlled by the law of the state in which you live. Some states restrict the right to vote for persons who have been convicted of a crime. This pamphlet is intended to help you determine whether you are eligible to vote in the state in which you live, and if so, what steps you must take to be permitted to vote.

What law governs whether my felony conviction limits my right to vote?

The impact of a criminal conviction on the right to vote varies widely from state to state. Whether you can vote after being convicted of a crime is determined by the state in which you live, not the state in which you were convicted.

Can I vote while I'm incarcerated in South Carolina?

If you are a resident of South Carolina, you may not vote while incarcerated as a result of a felony conviction. If you are a resident of another state who is temporarily incarcerated in South Carolina, you may be able to vote by absentee ballot in your home state. You need to consult the law of your home state regarding both criminal convictions and absentee ballots to see if this is a possibility.

I have been released from incarceration. How do I restore my right to vote?

In South Carolina, the right to vote is automatically restored upon completion of sentence including probation or parole. In order to vote, you must complete a standard registration form.

What if my conviction was for a federal crime?

South Carolina applies the same rules whether you were convicted of a federal or state crime.

What if I was convicted in another state?

The same rules apply for South Carolina voters even if the conviction occurred in another state.

What happens if I move to another state?

If you move to another state, your right to vote will be controlled by the laws of that state.

What are South Carolina's other voter registration requirements?

To vote in South Carolina, you must

- be a United States citizen
- be at least 18 years old on or before the next election
- be a resident of South Carolina and of the county and precinct
- not be under a court order declaring you mentally incompetent

When do I need to register to vote?

You must be registered at least 30 days prior to any election in order to vote in that election. Registration applications must be postmarked at least 30 days prior to that particular election to be eligible.

Where do I go to register?

Registration is available at many places in South Carolina, including County Boards of voter registration and the Department of Motor Vehicles. You may also register by mail. Registration may also be available at other state service agencies. Contact the State Election Commission office near you to find out which service agencies provide voter registration.